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ENG 3705-001: Multiculturalism's Greatest Hits (and Misses)

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Multiculturalism’s Greatest Hits (and Misses)
English 3705–Spring, 2014
12:30-1:45 TR Coleman 3160

Instructor: Tim Engles (tdengles@eiu.edu)
Office: Coleman 3831
Office hours: 10:45 – 11:45 p.m. TR, and by appointment

Required texts:

- August Wilson, *Fences* (1983)

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
(read the following carefully; these words constitute our contract, and I will request your written agreement to them)

Since the advent of “multicultural literature” as a genre in the 1990s, many minority-authored texts have emerged as widespread favorites among scholars and educators. We will juxtapose popular, widely heralded multicultural works with other worthy, but less familiar ones. Guiding questions will include: Who are the gate-keeping readers in our culture? What have they been seeking in terms of “multicultural literature,” and what have they missed? Why have some literary works attained canonical multicultural status, while others that also deserve recognition have been largely overlooked? How can scholars of multicultural literature, canon formation, and relevant social issues help us sort through these matters?

We will conduct our course as an inquiring conversation on these matters, with your active participation central to our work. Because we are a relatively small group, the success of our conversations will depend heavily on everyone’s participation. It is therefore crucial that you keep up with the reading, and that you do so with careful attention.

A note about reading: Since one skill you will be developing in this class is the art of textual analysis, you must give the readings more than a quick skimming over. Instead of wolfing them down right before class, set aside enough time to read carefully—take notes as you read, then decide for yourself, before coming to class, what each author is trying to describe and bring to light. Also, to ensure that your final grade reflects your reading effort, I will occasionally give “pop” quizzes at the beginning of class on required readings. These quizzes will be unannounced.
and they cannot be made up. I recognize that some students must be absent at times; accordingly, when I compile your quiz grades at the end of the semester into an average score, I will drop the lowest one—if you miss a quiz, that will be your one dropped quiz. If you don’t miss any quizzes, I will still drop your lowest score from your quiz average.

**Grades:** Each assignment will be graded on a 100-point scale (90-100 = A, etc.), and your final course grade will be determined in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>1st formal essay (5-6 pages)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd formal essay (7-8 pages)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event response and analysis (3-4 pages)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation/quizzes/attendance</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Missed quizzes, missed exams, and late papers:** 1) Because the answers to unannounced quizzes come up in class after quizzes are taken, they cannot be made up (even if you come to class late). These quizzes are one way to reward those who attend class regularly and on time. 2) There will be no make-up exams—students who miss the first exam will substitute a 6-8 page major essay in response to questions written by Dr. Engles. Students who miss the final exam will receive an automatic “Zero” on it, unless arrangements are made ahead of time regarding an essay substitution. 3) Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date whether the student is in class or not. Late papers will be penalized fifteen points each day they are late. You may turn in the two essays before their due dates if you know you must miss class that day.

**E-mail activity:** Enrollment in this class requires an e-mail account, and you must check it frequently, preferably every day, for messages pertaining to the course. You already have a free EIU e-mail account, which I would prefer that you use. You can use a commercial account for this course, but be aware that free web-based accounts (such as Hotmail or Gmail) sometimes cause problems with listserv subscriptions. Our class discussions may carry over onto the e-mail listserv, and I will occasionally send messages to the entire class. E-mail is also the quickest way to reach me if I am not in my office; I welcome any questions and comments.

Send me an e-mail message at the above address by Friday, January 17 at 3:00 p.m. to confirm your email address. See the Daily Schedule for details about what to include in the message.

**Classroom environment:** In class, I expect all of you to participate in discussions (class participation will be figured into your final grade). The best way to demonstrate that you are an active, engaged, and interested reader is by contributing regularly to class discussions, and by paying close, respectful attention to what everyone else has to say. I do not plan to lecture in this class; I want us to contribute together to a positive, challenging, interesting learning environment.

Also, be aware that sensitive issues sometimes arise within a course on multicultural material, so we must respect the opinions of others—try to respond to ideas, rather than to the person stating them. In my opinion, it’s okay for discussions to occasionally become “heated,” and “off the
topic" of literature, as long as we respect each other as people. If you have questions, no matter how simple or complicated, go ahead and ask me, either in class or via e-mail—chances are that other students have the same question.

Some pet-peeves of mine, and some requests you’ve probably heard before: in the interests of keeping everyone in class undistracted and focused, please do not read outside materials, chew gum, or eat food in class (drinking beverages is okay), and do not use a computer in class. Be sure to silence your phone ahead of time, and do not check or write text messages during class.

If you happen to be expecting an emergency call or text, it’s okay to keep your phone on, but be sure to let me know before class begins.

No baseball caps in class, please, though if you want to wear one, turn it backwards so we can see your eyes.

Finally, please refrain from “packing up” during the last few minutes of class; I will signal when the discussion is finished, and I promise to end each class by the time the period is over (you’re welcome to call me on it if I don’t).

**Attendance policy:** The rule regarding attendance is: be here; I notice and record absences. I expect you to attend class every day, on time, and prepared to discuss the material listed for that day on the “daily schedule.” Missing class frequently will lower your final grade as well as your grade on the reading quizzes. More than three absences will lower your final course grade by one letter grade for each additional absence. In addition, note that coming to class “prepared” means coming to class with that day’s assigned reading—anyone who does not have the day’s assigned reading with them may be considered absent.

**Regarding tardiness:** this is a small class, so late arrivals are disruptive—if for some bizarre reason you wish to get on my bad side, you can easily do so by developing the habit of arriving late for class. If you will not be able to arrive for this class on time because of other commitments, drop it and take another course. Finally, you are responsible for all assignments, whether you attend class or not. Get the telephone number of one or two other students in class, or get a hold of me, so you can find out about any missed assignments before you come to class.

**Academic honesty:** Keep in mind, of course, the English Department’s policy on plagiarism: “Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—‘The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s original work’ (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.”
ENGLISH 3705 – DAILY SCHEDULE
(this schedule may be subject to change; bring the day’s reading material to class—
students who don’t do so may be marked absent)

T JAN 14  Introduction to the course and to each other; in-class film-screening: “Two Lies” (1989) by Pam Tom

R JAN 16  Reading for today: Tan, *The Joy Luck Club*, all four stories in the “Feathers from a Thousand Li Away” section

F JAN 17  By 3 p.m. today, carefully read the policies and procedures for this course, and then send a message to Dr. Engles (tdengles@eiu.edu): 1) explain which course you are in (English 3705); 2) describe yourself in whatever ways you choose, including your career aspirations; 3) write a statement to the effect that you have read and agree with the course policies and procedures; and 4) as with all e-mail messages, be sure that you “sign” it by adding your name at the end.

T JAN 21  *The Joy Luck Club*, “The Twenty-Six Malignant Gates”

R JAN 23  *The Joy Luck Club*, “American Translation”

T JAN 28  *The Joy Luck Club*, “Queen Mother of the Western Skies”

R JAN 30  Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*, “No Name Woman” & “White Tigers”

T FEB 4  *The Woman Warrior*, “Shaman” & “At the Western Palace”

R FEB 6  *The Woman Warrior*, “A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe”

T FEB 11 Sau-ling Cynthia Wong, “‘Sugar Sisterhood’: Situating the Amy Tan Phenomenon” (from *The Ethnic Canon: Histories, Institutions, and Interventions*, edited by David Palumbo-Liu)

Coming soon—the rest of the Daily Schedule…